

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 8484

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, SEDU, IR

SUBJ: SHAH ANNOUNCES CAMPAIGN TO WIPE OUT ILLITERACY

1. SHAH AND EMPRESS FARAH PRESIDED OVER EIGHTH ANNUAL RAMSAR EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE WHICH OPENED AUGUST 30 FOR SEVERAL DAYS. FIRST THERE WAS SERIES OF REPORTS CALLING FOR IMPROVED ADMINISTRATION OF ENTIRE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. PARTICIPATING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIS ANNUAL AFFAIR, EMPRESS FARAH MADE COGENT SUGGESTION THAT FACULTY AND STUDENTS ESTABLISH A DIALOGUE AND ADDED THAT IT SHOULD BEGIN AT THE TOP. SHE SPECULATED THAT SOME PROFESSORS MIGHT BE RELUCTANT TO TAKE PART, EITHER BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT WELL INFORMED ABOUT CURRENT ISSUES OR BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT SUCH DEBATES MIGHT GET THEM INTO TROUBLE. FARAH WONDERED ALOUD WHY STUDENTS WERE NOT INVITED TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO RAISE ISSUES WHICH-CONCERNED THEM.

2. HIGH POINT OF SHAH'S REMARKS WAS CALL FOR ERADICATION OF ILLITERACY IN TWELVE YEARS, BY WHICH TIME IRAN WOULD ENTER THE "GREAT CIVILIZATION." REST OF HIS REMARKS WAS SOMEWHAT RAMBLING CRITICISM OF LAZY MENTAL ATTITUDES AND APATHY WITHIN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AND IRANIAN SOCIETY IN GENERAL, HE CONDEMNED UNDER-PERFORMANCE IN WORK AS A FORM OF CHEATING AGAINST SOCIETY, HE CALLED FOR FRANK DISCUSSION OF ISSUES WITHIN RESURGENCY PARTH"FAMILY." SHAH EXPRESSED BEWILDERMENT THAT SOME ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY COULD SPEAK AGAINST GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD

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ACCOMPLISHED SUCH UNPRECEDENTED ADVANCES. SPEAKING OF EDUCATIONAL

PLANNING, HE CALLED FOR REALISTIC SCHEMES INSTEAD OF GRANDIOSE DREAMS WHICH COULD NOT BE FULFILLED. SHAH WAS INTERRUPTED TWICE BY FARAH WHO ADDED POINTS ABOUT NEED FOR CONSIDERATION OF PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AT SUCH CONFERENCES AND ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVING BOTH PRE-NATAL AND POST-NATAL NUTRITION, THE FORMER THROUGH BETTER NUTRITION FOR EXPECTANT MOTHERS. (TEXT OF SHAH'S REMARKS TO BE SENT BY AIRGRAM.)

3. COMMENT/ SO FAR, CONFERENCE HAS BEEN FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS. SHAH CRITICIZED GRANDIOSE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING, YET NOW EXPECTS ILLITERACY TO BE ELIMINATED IN DOZEN YEARS AFTER AS MANY YEARS OF ACTIVITY BY LITERACY CORPS HAVE RESULTED IN ONLY LIMITED PROGRESS TOWARD THAT GOAL. DESPITE HIS CALL FOR RUTHLESS ANALYSIS AND STOCK-TAKING, SHAH MADE ONLY PASSING REFERENCE TO LAST YEAR'S BOLD PROPOSALS FOR FREE EDUCATION THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE, FREE SCHOOL LUNCHES,

AND TUITION GRANTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (TEHRAN 8601 OF 1974). HIS COMMENT ABOUT PUZZLEMENT OVER ANTIGOI STATEMENTS BY SOME GROUPS SUGGEST HE HAS LITTLE SYMPATHY FOR ISSUES WHICH ARE IMPORTANT TO STUDENTS AND YOUTH. FARAH CAME CLOSER TO UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM WHEN SHE SUGGESTED STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DISCUSS ISSUES WITH PROFESSORS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. PERHAPS THERE WILL BE MORE MEANINGFUL CONCLUSIONS IN RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BEFORE THE END OF THE CONFERENCE.
HELMS

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